

there was a good deal of corruption in their incapacity.

Until the history of the naval administration of the period has been more minutely investigated, it is impossible to decide.

The sea-fights of the period are a more attractive subject. The strategic aspects of the war as a whole have been admirably summarised by Admiral Mahan. He points out the initial mistake made by Louis XIV in not preventing

the conjunction of England and Holland. At the moment of William's expedition, Louis^f could control the sea if he would/ He should have sent his navy into the Channel and attacked Holland by land. In this way he would have kept William at home. But instead of that he turned his armies against Germany, and left the road to England open instead of using his navy to bar it.¹ After the Revolution

Louis[^] having a decided superiority at sea, failed properly to support James II in Ireland. Ireland was the weakest point in William's frontier, and as long as it was unsubdued his power was not secure in England. Louis ought to have used his fleet during 1689 and 1690 to prevent the transport of William's forces to Ireland or to cut the communications between William's forces there and their base in England. There is nothing more striking than the carelessness shown by both the contending parties, during

the time that Ireland was in dispute, as to the
communica-
tions of their opponents with the island ; but
this was
especially strange in the French, as they had
the larger
forces, and must have received pretty
accurate information
of what was going on from disaffected persons
in England.
. . . The English communications were not
even threat-
ened for an hour/ ²

² A. T. Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History*
(1890), pp. 177-97.

³ *Ibid.* p. 181.